

THE AVERAGE CHURCH IN AMERICA AND SARDIS

Revelation 3:1-6

Part Two

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday we talked about the church at Sardis, and Jesus came on the scene and ministered to them as an emergency doctor would to a dying patient.
2. Jesus told them that they were on their last legs unless they immediately did a reversal in their devotion to God and His ministry.
3. The majority of the members of the Sardis church were already dead spiritually, but they had just a small remnant that had not yielded to the lifestyle and religion of the world.
4. The Sardis church was dying a common death which is so subtle, sly, and slow that churches seldom wake up until it's too late.
5. The story of the frog and the kettle.
6. Let's look at Jesus's exhortations to this church during this time of critical need.

I. (v. 1) SARDIS WAS DYING A COMMON DEATH.

1. When a church is filled with activities and busy constantly, they think they're doing great.
2. We must understand that there's a difference between doing church work and doing the work of the church.
3. When the Great Physician from glory reached down from heaven to the church body to check her spiritual pulse, he immediately pronounced her dead.
4. The crowd didn't know the difference between a dead church and a healthy one, but God did.
5. They needed the song entitled, "The Great Physician"
The Great Physician now is near. The sympathizing Jesus. He speaks the drooping heart to cheer, Oh! Hear the voice of Jesus. Sweetest note in seraph song, Sweetest name on mortal tongue. Sweetest Carol ever sung, Jesus, Blessed Jesus.
6. I Timothy 5:6 – ***But she that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.***
7. II Timothy 3:5 – ***Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.***

8. Ephesians 4:18 – ***Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.***
9. Isa 29:13 – ***The people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips they honor me, but have removed their heart far from me.***
10. The Lord condemned outward appearances of religious activity that aren't directed by the Holy Spirit.
11. John 4:24 – ***God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.***
12. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for being whitewashed sepulchres.
13. The sight of death is frightening enough, but to make something that is dead look alive is a frightening thing.
14. You'll never find the Gospel in a coffin nor the fires of revival in a spiritual refrigerator.
15. I Samuel 16:7 – ***Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.***

II. (vv. 2-3) THE REAL CURE FOR DEATH.

1. (vv. 2-3) The cure prescribed by Jesus takes four immediate steps.
 - A. (v. 2) Be watching – Watchful and alert with spiritual eye open.
 - B. (v. 2) Be strengthening – Like pulling final coals of a fire together to keep it from going out.
 - 1) Call prayer meetings to beseech God to intervene.
 - 2) Strengthen your real ministry for Jesus for that work of the church, Christ intends you to do is nowhere near complete and won't be until He comes.
 - C. (v. 3) Be remembering the things of God you've learned.
 - 1) Establish truths of God permanently in your heart.
 - 2) Don't let anyone move you from the truth in Jesus.
 - D. (v. 3) Be repenting of sins as soon as they are committed.
 - 1) This means have a change of mind and heart immediately.
 - 2) It's dangerous earthly and eternally to delay repentance.
2. (v. 3) If these things are not immediately done the Lord will destroy you suddenly.
3. The Lord is now extending His grace in giving Sardis a chance to pass the Lord's inspection.
4. God is now offering you and me that same chance for He is a God of a second chance.

5. God is continually throwing road blocks of love across your path-way of destruction.
 - A. He is calling through His real church, prophets, Bible, and Spirit for you to turn around.
 - B. Example of Causeway Bridge with no turnarounds.
 - C. There comes a time with no more turn arounds and destruction is inevitable.

[Jesus has pronounced the real condition and cure for the church, now. . .]

III. (vv. 4-5) THE REAL, LIVING CHRISTIANS AMONG THE DEAD.

1. (v. 4) The Faithful Few.
 - A. Some hadn't soiled their garments with the sins of self-centered luxury and hypocrisy.
 - B. Matthew 7:13-14 – ***Enter in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be who go in that way; Because narrow is the gate, and hard is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.***
 - C. You either are on the narrow road or the broad road of life.
 - D. Driving down the middle will get you hurt, and that's why we have lines on the highway.
 - E. There has been a line drawn through eternity and it is the old rugged cross pointing to God above, earth beneath and to the ends of earth with the cross bars.
 - F. Ex 32:26 – ***Whoever on the Lord's side, let him come after Me.***
 - G. There were a few Godly saints.
 - 1) They were Spiritual among the Unspiritual.
 - 2) They were the Sincere among the Hypocrites.
 - 3) They were the Humble among the Proud.
 - 4) They were the Separated among the Worldly.
 - H. These were salt and light among a decaying, dark world.

[Not only The Faithful Few, but also. . .]

2. (v. 5) The Fullness of their Future.
 - A. The Lord singled these faithful few out with promises.
 - B. These had the promise of their names in the Book of Life.
 - C. We have a God who knows your name and records it.
 - D. He knows your down-sitting and your up-risings.
 - E. To the faithful few, God promised:
 - 1) A white robe of victory.
 - 2) A permanent listing in Heaven's roll book.
 - 3) A personal introduction to God the Father and all the Holy angels.

Conclusion:

1. God knows you in either one of two ways:
 - A. He either knows you by your name or . . .
 - B. He knows you by absence of your name in book, and a record of your sin.
2. If God's record book were pulled today, would your name be in the Book?
3. Would you be listed among those who chose the narrow road?
4. Nothing would thrill Jesus more than for you to turn from sin so He could forget their ugliness and cover them with His blood!!